

## **REMARKS**

### **I. Status of Claims**

Claims 1 and 3-23 are pending in this application. Claim 1 is independent and currently amended to include the subject matter of claim 2, which is canceled without prejudice to and/or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Claims 18 and 20-23 are also amended to correct claim dependency. Claims 24-45, drawn to non-elected subject matter, are canceled without prejudice to and/or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. The Applicant reserves the right to file one or more divisional application(s) directed to the non-elected subject matter in accordance with the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 121.

Claims 1, 13, and 16 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by USP 6,440,503 to Merdan.

Claims 1, 4-5, 10, and 12-17 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being allegedly anticipated by USP 6,766,764 to Chrisey et al ("Chrisey").

Claims 1, 3-9, 10, 12-20, 22-23 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over USPGPUB 2006/0051522 to Talton in view of Chrisey.

Claims 2, 11, and 21 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

### **II. Claim Objections**

The Applicant notes that the Examiner has renumbered the claims because the claims as originally filed did not include a claim 9. The listing of claims provided herewith reflects the renumbered claims.

### **III. Pending Claims**

The Office Action indicates that claim 2 stands objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of its base claim. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully submits that, without waiver of or prejudice to the subject matter of the scope of original claims, claim 1, from which

claim 2 depends, is amended to include all of the limitations of claim 2.

Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 and its dependent claims are patentable over the cited references.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

In light of the above discussion, the Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4420 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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